



File Code: 1950

Date: August 5, 2004

Dear Interested Citizen:

Last December, I sought your input regarding my proposal to amend the Winema National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan by removing Late-Successional Reserve (LSR) designation around Lake of the Woods and adding LSR designation to the Cold Springs area. The proposed change would affect approximately 5,000 acres of the Klamath Ranger District.

Late-Successional Reserves were established as part of the Northwest Forest Plan in 1994. The area around Lake of the Woods (LOW) was allocated to LSR at that time. However, the area is minimally suitable as habitat for species dependent on late-successional forests. The Lake of the Woods area is about half water (not suitable as late-successional habitat) and receives high recreation use. Several campgrounds, a resort, and approximately 220 recreational residences have been developed in the area. Since 1994, conflicts between management needed for the recreation area (such as hazard tree removal and fuels reduction) and conditions needed to benefit late-successional species (high density of snags and down wood) have been identified. Human activity, noise (cars and boats in summer, snowmobiles in winter) and light levels, and removal of standing dead trees and downed logs all reduce habitat effectiveness for spotted owls and other old growth associated species. I proposed this land allocation change to respond to these conflicts and increase the quality of the LSR network on the Klamath Ranger District.

During the past several months, an interdisciplinary team of Forest Service specialists have reviewed your comments and prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA). The team found that the Cold Springs area would provide a higher quality LSR than what currently exists around Lake of the Woods. The area is connected to other late-successional reserves and habitats and has less public use or adjacent activity than Lake of the Woods. The Cold Springs area contains about 1,533 acres of nesting, roosting, foraging and dispersal habitat, 952 more acres than LOW. The Cold Springs area is already designated as Critical Habitat for spotted owls and there are spotted owl nests documented in the area.

The EA is currently posted on the Winema National Forest website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/winema/management/analyses/lowlsr>. A summary of the EA and maps are attached to this letter for your convenience. Three alternatives are considered in the EA (besides the Proposed Action): No Action (leave land allocations as is); Alternative 2 (remove LSR status from LOW, add LSR status to the Burton Butte area); and Alternative 3 (remove LSR status from LOW, add LSR status to the Little Aspen area). The EA compares the relative effects of each of the alternatives on vegetation (including timber and fire/fuels), grazing, and recreation management programs; soils and water; and special status plant, wildlife and fish species.

I am in the process of making a decision on this project. Once published, my Decision Notice



will be subject to appeal under the 36 CFR 217 regulations. I will consider any comments received by September 15, 2004, in my decision.

You may mail comments to Kent Russell, Klamath District Ranger, at 1936 California Ave, Klamath Falls, OR, 97601 or email them to comment-pacificnorthwest-winemachiloquin@fs.fed.us. Please add *Comments on the Lake of the Woods LSR Relocation* to the subject line of any emails. Feel free to contact Kent at 541-885-3406 for more information or to request a hard copy of the EA.

Sincerely,

/s/ Karen Shimamoto
KAREN SHIMAMOTO
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures (summary and maps)